



Best practice 2

Title of good practice	SSE Riga Academic Advising process
Keywords (meta tag)	Cognitive Flexibility, learning skills, personal development, self reflection.
Provided by	SSE Riga
Language	English

Best Practice

Academic advising the origins:

The idea to support students with some personal guidance in the education process has been on the agenda for many years. Students are all very different personalities and the issues and challenges they face are very different. Some students are more open and extroverted, some are very introverted. There are significant differences in cognitive flexibility as well e.g. some students can easily switch between the different tasks but for some this process is very quick and smooth. No matter to which group the student belongs it is important to pay attention to cognitive flexibility and better understand the mental processes taking place in one's mind.

Considering the above mentioned arguments in 2014 the decision was made to introduce academic advising to all Year 1 students at SSE Riga. Initially it was started as a pilot project but soon it became evident that it is very beneficial and appreciated by students thus it was made permanent and mandatory. Basically it consists of 4 face to face meetings during the academic year. During those meetings the advisor and advisee discuss the issues related to study performance, well being etc.

Cognitive flexibility and academic advising

During the advising sessions the most important tool of analysis is self reflection. There is no universal advice that can be given to each student that would work equally well. Thus students are asked to constantly evaluate their performance and mental processes to understand what affects their performance. This includes cognitive flexibility as well. First of all students are encouraged to understand the switching time between different tasks. E.g. they are asked to assess how quickly they can change from one task to another? How fast can they get "into the topic" of the next task? etc. Later the switching is discussed in more depth e.g. how the switching time changes depending on the type of the task or study subject? What are the other factors that affect the switching time etc.

Impact on students

The discussions on cognitive flexibility are having a significant impact on the study process and better understanding of the ways how to improve. Furthermore there is also a significant impact on the employability after graduation. Understanding of cognitive processes and in particular cognitive flexibility can significantly improve work performance and wellbeing as well. In addition there are significant benefits from the self reflection skills that can be used for further personal development.



Impact on advisors

Besides the significant positive impact on the students there is a positive influence on the advisors as well. First of all it is related to constant improvement in understanding of the cognitive processes of students including cognitive flexibility. The substantial amount of observations allow the advisors to see the patterns and make more general conclusions on the factors that affect cognitive flexibility and study skills. Equally so this knowledge can be utilised by the advisors to better understand their cognitive processes and find the best way to combine the cognitive flexibility with well being.

Conclusions and ways forward

Academic advising and cognitive flexibility as one of the covered topics proved to be very beneficial for both students and academic advisors. Thus it can be suggested that such type of support for students should be further developed and spread. This implies further development within SSE Riga but also spreading this as a best practice for other universities and HEI's as well.

Reference Link (if any)	https://www.sseriga.edu/career-development
Type of material	BEST PRACTICE